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VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FOR MENTALLY RETARDED PUPIL-CLIENTS. SUMMARY OF FINAL REPORT.

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THIS PROJECT WAS INITIATED TO HELP PUBLIC SCHOOLS MEET SOME OF THE MAJOR REHABILITATION NEEDS OF MENTALLY RETARDED PUPILS THROUGH A COORDINATED PROGRAM OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY SPECIAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION. THE 24 STEPS IN THE PROJECT INCLUDED--(1) A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT OUTLINED INDIVIDUAL AGENCY AND RECIPROCAL RESPONSIBILITIES, (2) EXISTING AND PLANNED SECONDARY SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS WERE EVALUATED, AND SEVEN SCHOOLS WERE SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE, (3) A STATE LEVEL RESOURCE COMMITTEE WAS APPOINTED, (4) ON THE BASIS OF A 57-ITEM EVALUATION, 3,636 PUPILS WERE REFERRED FOR SERVICE, (5) A VOCATIONAL APPRAISAL SERVED AS A BASIS FOR INDIVIDUALIZED PREVOCATIONAL TRAINING PLANS, (6) 771 PUPILS PARTICIPATED IN ON-CAMPUS TRAINING STATIONS, (7) LOCAL RESOURCE COMMITTEES HELPED DEVELOP WORK-STUDY PROGRAMS IN WHICH 636 PUPILS PARTICIPATED, (8) VOCATIONALLY ORIENTED CURRICULUM GUIDES WERE DEVELOPED IN THREE SCHOOLS, (9) VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ADJUSTMENT COUNSELORS WERE ASSIGNED, (10) JOB PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES WERE DEVELOPED THROUGHOUT THE STATE, (11) FOLLOWUP SERVICES WERE PROVIDED, AND (12) A COOPERATIVE INSERVICE PERSONNEL TRAINING PROGRAM WAS INSTITUTED. THREE OF THE NINE CONCLUSIONS WERE--(1) THE LENGTH OF TIME IN THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM WAS SIGNIFICANT AS IT RELATED TO JOB PLACEMENT, (2) THE PUPILS' IQ WAS NOT USEFUL IN PREDICTING SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT, AND (3) ON-THE-JOB TRAINING APPEARED TO BE A PRACTICAL APPROACH. (EM)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FOR MENTALLY RETARDED PUPIL-CLIENTS

SUMMARY OF FINAL REPORT

PROJECT 836

A PROJECT TO ASSIST PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO MEET SOME OF THE MAJOR REHABILITATION NEEDS OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED

GEORGIA OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SEPTEMBER 1966

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SUMMARY

Project 836 was initiated to assist public schools in meeting some of the major rehabilitation needs of mentally retarded pupils through a coordinated program of services provided by special education and vocational rehabilitation. The project was developed to demonstrate the effectiveness of providing vocational rehabilitation services to selected pupils concurrently with other secondary educational and vocational training experiences. Since the vocational rehabilitation of the educable mentally retarded was viewed as a state and community responsibility this project emphasized the utilization of state and local resources in a cooperative effort between divisions of the State Department of Education, local school systems, and other agencies on a state-wide basis.

The objectives of this Research and Demonstration Project, as stated in the initial proposal were divided into nine areas. These areas were:

I To encourage community evaluation of current programs for and needs of mentally retarded individuals.

II To stimulate the utilization of all community resources in program evaluation, planning, and provision of educational services to the mentally retarded.

III To cooperate with the Division of Instruction and local school systems in the development of meaningful and effective curricula for the mentally retarded and the utilization of community resources in secondary programs.

IV To cooperate with the Division of Vocational Education and private vocational schools in the development of vocational training programs for the mentally retarded.

V To cooperate with state and local school officials and local vocational rehabilitation counselors in evaluating the vocational potential of mentally retarded pupils participating in secondary programs throughout the state.

VI To involve vocational rehabilitation counselors to a greater extent in the vocational rehabilitation of the mentally retarded.

VII To cooperate with local school systems, local vocational education representatives, local vocational rehabilitation counselors, local agencies and organizations in the development of work-study programs, on-the-job training, and employment opportunities.

VIII To assist in the provision of counseling, guidance, and placement services to mentally retarded pupils participating in the secondary programs.

IX To increase substantially and more effectively the number of mentally retarded individuals being prepared for remunerative employment.

The implementation and development of the program sponsored by this Project required a series of phases or steps. Although the sequence of these steps varied to some extent depending upon local circumstances, the methodology of the project was as follows:

Step One — The first step was taken prior to the submission of an application for the grant. Staff members in Vocational Rehabilitation and Special Education at both the state and local levels had carried on a dialogue which refined the project objectives and insured acceptance of the project services.

Step Two — A Cooperative Agreement was approved by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Unit, Services for Exceptional Children, Division of Instruction, within the State Department of Education. This agreement outlined individual agency and reciprocal responsibilities in the project.

Step Three — Project staff and representatives from Special Education evaluated existing and planned secondary special education programs and selected seven school systems to participate in the project.

Step Four — The superintendent of each approved local school system signed the agreement with Vocational Rehabilitation and Special Education wherein each party agreed to provide specific services for the educable mentally retarded in a secondary school setting.

Step Five — A State Level Resource Committee comprised of agency and organization representatives was appointed to provide counsel and assistance in the solution of problems encountered in the initiation, development, and expansion of project services.

Step Six — In addition to a project director, Vocational Rehabilitation assigned a program supervisor as project coordinator, and three experienced vocational rehabilitation specialists in mental retardation to the project. Each specialist, or Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant, was assigned to work with participating school systems in contiguous geographical areas where he provided consultation and

coordinated Vocational Rehabilitation services. It was anticipated that the Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant would confine himself to advisement and consultation in the following areas: (1) secondary curriculum evaluation and enrichment, (2) vocational evaluation, (3) work-study programs, (4) vocational training, (5) on-the-job training, (6) case work, (7) job placement and (8) follow-up. The Consultant performed these functions and in addition carried pupil-clients on his case load in referred status.

Step Seven — Special Education assigned a State Consultant in Mental Retardation to give priority in his work to the school personnel in systems participating in the project.

Step Eight — Pupils were referred at age 14 to the Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant by Special Education teachers. Teachers utilized a referral and appraisal instrument to provide basic educational information and an evaluation of the individual as he compared with an average person of the same age, race, and sex on the basis of some fifty-seven criteria of personal, social, emotional, and vocational adjustment. This appraisal alerted the teachers to the traits and skills which are significant in the vocational rehabilitation of the mentally retarded. This completed instrument constituted a genesis for an individualized curriculum. During the project period three thousand six hundred and thirty-six pupils were referred for service.

Step Nine — Pupil-clients were scheduled for a vocational appraisal clinic which was coordinated by the Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant. In the clinic a licensed psychologist interviewed the pupil-client, administered intelligence and projective tests, and developed a psychological evaluation report. The consultant administered vocational tests, completed necessary rehabilitation forms, authorized and arranged for a physical examination, and reviewed all available data with the psychologist. This information was used to establish eligibility, ascertain feasibility and identify problems which should receive attention in the project. The vocational potential of two thousand and fifteen pupil-clients was evaluated over the five year period.

Step Ten — During a subsequent home visit the consultant interviewed one or both parents, described the services available through the project, interpreted test results, secured additional personal and sociological information, and secured written consent for the pupil-client to participate in the project.

Step Eleven

Upon the receipt of medical and psychological evaluation reports, a vocational appraisal report was developed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant. This report summarized background information, educational achievement, physical capacities, intellectual capacities, emotional factors, vocational test results, and vocational implications. The teacher received a copy of this report and the data upon which it was based.

Step Twelve

Pupil-client needs identified in the vocational appraisal report served as a basis for the development of a pre-vocational training plan by the consultant, teacher, pupil-client and his parents. This plan included a counseling statement, vocational preference, special and regular class assignments together with recommended school work-in and school work-out pre-vocational training experiences.

Step Thirteen

Training stations were developed on-campus for eligible and feasible pupil-clients within the 14-16 age range to provide opportunities for developing basic worker traits and skills and enhancing personal and social adjustment. School personnel who supervised these jobs made monthly reports to the teacher and the Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant. These reports provided a mechanism for other school personnel to participate in curricula revisions. The Special Education teacher coordinated this phase of the project in which seven hundred and seventy-one pupil-clients participated.

Step Fourteen

Local Advisory Committees for Special Education were expanded to constitute Local Resource Committees which included representatives from agencies and organizations having a special interest in or a responsibility for the mentally retarded. Community leaders and representatives from civic clubs participated in the activities of this committee. The Local Resource Committee provided guidance to project staff, helped interpret the program to the community and stimulated the development of services and facilities for the mentally retarded in the community. Members of this committee provided assistance in identifying training stations and job opportunities for pupil-clients. It was not feasible to develop a Local Resource Committee for each participating school or system. However, key people in the various communities served as an informal resource committee. During the course of the project the Local Resource Committee tended to become less formal but more flexible and effective.

Step Fifteen

A work-study program was developed in each of the original and subsequently approved school systems with the assistance of school personnel, resource committee members, community leaders and businessmen. Pupil-clients were placed in a series of jobs in the community which served as training stations. Their rotation among selected training stations about every semester was designed to refine the evaluation, develop basic worker traits and skills, provide a work experience background and select the best vocational objective. Seven hundred and thirty-six pupil-clients who were 16 years of age or above participated in this phase of the project.

Flexibility was built into the work study program through provisions which ranged from paying the businessman tuition for the initial placement of a pupil-client in a training station to provisions for the businessmen to pay the pupil-clients the minimum wage. The client's ability to do the job was the determining factor. Pupil-clients received school credit for these training station experiences. The Vocational Rehabilitation consultant assumed the primary responsibility for securing training stations off campus and supervising pupils who participated.

Step Sixteen

School-Community resources were developed during the second and subsequent years of the project. Work laboratories were developed on campus to refine vocational evaluation and augment adjustment training prior to placement in commercial training stations off campus. In Atlanta, the A. P. Jarrell Pre-Vocational Evaluation and Training Center was developed to serve as an intermediary step between training station experiences on campus and in commercial establishments in the community. In addition to these facilities which were developed specifically for pupil-clients in the project, five workshops in the state developed evaluation and adjustment services for project clients. Seven hundred and thirty-two pupil-clients received services from facilities. Progress reports from staff members in these facilities contained helpful suggestions for curricula revisions.

Step Seventeen

In addition to the individual curricula revisions, project activities influenced the development of a vocationally orientated curriculum guide in three school systems and the development of a Guide to Curriculum Development for Educable Mentally Retarded Children by the Unit, Services for Exceptional Children.

Step Eighteen

Counseling was provided throughout the project by the Vocational Rehabilitation consultant, school personnel, facility personnel, and businessmen who supervised pupil-clients on training stations.

It was anticipated in the original design of the project that Vocational Rehabilitation counselors in the general program would accept clients of this project on their case loads and provide indicated Vocational Rehabilitation services including counseling. For reasons enumerated in the narrative, this objective of the project was not achieved. Therefore, vocational rehabilitation adjustment counselors were assigned during the fourth year of the project to work full-time with the educable mentally retarded pupil-clients from referral through closure. He performed the function planned for the local Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and some of the functions of the Vocational Rehabilitation consultant.

Step Nineteen

The assignment of counselors for the mentally retarded permitted the Vocational Rehabilitation consultant to resume the role originally planned - the provision of consultation and the development of community resources. He supervised the counselors assigned to the project and coordinated the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services to the mentally retarded within his assigned geographical area.

Step Twenty

Vocational training was provided primarily through on-the-job training. Although one of the project objectives was to develop specific training in state trade schools, the high academic requirements and a shift to technical training in these schools made it impossible to achieve this objective completely during the project period. However, a limited number of pupil-clients received specific vocational training in commercial trade schools.

Step Twenty-One

Job placement opportunities were developed throughout the state by Resource Committee members, public school personnel and project staff. Employment for the retarded was secured in private enterprises, public institutions and in the Federal government. The Vocational Rehabilitation counselor for the mentally retarded assumed the primary responsibility for job placement.

Step Twenty-Two

Follow-up services were provided by project staff to insure that the pupil-client adjusted satisfactorily in their employment.

Step Twenty-Three

Rehabilitation in this project increased, as anticipated, in proportion to the tenure of the project in a school system and the number of pupil-clients served. Closures increased from one the first year to nine, forty-four, one hundred and seven, and two hundred and ten respectively for each subsequent year of the project.

Step Twenty-Four

In an effort to improve communication between Vocational Rehabilitation and Special Education and to up-grade the quality of services provided to the retarded, a Cooperative In-Service Training Program was instituted through the use of Extension and Improvement Funds.

Conclusions:

1. Seven of the nine objectives of this project were fulfilled with varying degrees of success as reflected in the various chapters of this report.

2. The methodology was shown to be workable as revised and demonstrated by the fact that the number of systems included in this demonstration project increased from seven to thirty-five, the number of pupil-clients increased from three hundred and thirty-eight to three thousand six hundred and thirty-six, and the number of rehabilitations increased from one the first year to two hundred and ten the fifth year of the project.

3. Vocational Rehabilitation services can be provided the mentally retarded concurrently with other secondary school experiences. One hundred and sixteen out of the one hundred and twenty-five people concerned with this project at the local level responded to a questionnaire which revealed that approximately 80 per cent of the respondents believed that the project was an effective way to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of the adolescent mentally retarded.

4. The case service cost for the rehabilitation of pupil-clients through this project was relatively low as demonstrated by the fact that the average case service cost per rehabilitant was two hundred and forty-seven dollars ($247).

5. The length of time in the cooperative program is significant as it relates to job placement.

6. The IQ of the pupil-clients participating in this project was not found to be useful for predicting successful employment.

7. On-the-job training appears to be a practical approach in the vocational training of the mentally retarded.

8. The work-study program as conducted in this project is a sound, acceptable, and workable approach to education and rehabilitation of mentally retarded pupil-clients.

9. The assignment of a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor to work full time with the mentally retarded in a cooperative program with Special Education is an effective approach to the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Implications:

1. The program of services sponsored by this project requires a substantial investment in Vocational Rehabilitation staff time over an extended period of time.

2. This type program places heavy demands on state level Special Education Consultant staff.

3. Specialized joint in-service training for teachers and counselors is essential.

4. Teacher training programs could make a more substantial contribution to this type cooperative program through a stronger vocational orientation in their curriculum.

Recommendations:

1. The Program for the Educable Mentally Retarded developed through Research and Demonstration Project 836 should be continued as revised using Section II funds.

2. A project to determine guide lines and the effectiveness of group counseling in a school setting with Educable Mentally Retarded is needed and should be developed.

3. Joint staff in-service training should be continued and expanded.

4. Work laboratories should be established in schools or systems where the need of this type facility exists.

5. Teachers should be provided equipment with vocational implications.

6. Pre-vocational centers, such as the A. P. Jarrell Pre-Vocational Evaluation and Training Center, should be established in geographical areas where justified by a sufficient number of pupil-clients.

7. College and university teacher training programs should consider providing instruction in vocationally oriented curriculum and rehabilitation procedures to prospective secondary special education teachers.